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Who was the Successor of Joseph Smith?

Not long ago we saw an article in an Iowa paper, dated Utah, —— '90, but directed to an Iowa divine. The answer was given to the Utah man, but it did not agree with what Joseph Smith taught his people concerning his successor thirteen years before his death. The Utah man claimed to be an honest seeker for truth, and wanted to learn who the successor of Joseph Smith was.

We made up our mind to point the Utah man, to what God and Joseph Smith said on that question. Men have claimed they were the duly Ordained, and all others were usurpers, when they were the greatest villians in all the land, and led many to ruin. There was no need of this, as Joseph left all doctrinal questions plainly written in the book of D. & C. Men have seceded, and others have cried, Mormon delusion, when these very men were the most deluded of all men. Mormonism, proper, is no delusion. It will bear as close criticism as any other *ism*, and will stand clear as the sun and fair as the moon, when all other isms will travel with that stone John told of in Rev. xviii, 21.

No man ever contended for good order and the true sciences, clearer than did Mr. Smith. No man despised unsound doctrine in State or Church more than Joseph. And the policy of government he handed down to us yet speaks, though he sleeps with the worthy dead. This subject of Prophet Making is just as clearly set forth in the church Book of Rules, as is any city or state law on election of city or state officers. As early as 1831, he told the church how his successor would be planted in his stead. At his death, all the people had to do to learn the duly appointed man, was to heed the rules he gave them 13 years before his death.

There was no excuse for divisions; the honest man who could read could see when, and through whom he was to be appointed, and would identify the man Angels ordained, to be the successor. But they set the law aside, and set up their own ways. And men are doing the same this day, in sending out Sermons and Tracts far away, deceiving the people by their opinions, and the testimony of dead apostates, who preached lies when alive—and many are led this day by these false teachers. Much of the past work of these villians has been laid to Joseph Smith, when he had no more to do with them or their principles, than Abraham Lincoln had to do with Jefferson Davis.

Many have claimed that Mr. Smith was not parliamentary, and did not claim nor contend for good order. No greater mistake could been made. He claimed the government of God (the church) on earth, could only exist and prosper as it heeded the Priest-hood of the Son of God. And then added: "As no city or State can do legal business without duly authorized officers, no more could the church." We give his views on Prophet Making, and on what terms to accept their Revelations: "We do not consider ourselves bound to receive any revelations from any man or woman without their being called or legally constituted and ordained, and given sufficient proofs of it."—Joseph Smith's Letter of April, 1833.

By this we see he put the people on their guard, that they be not deceived by usurpers. Yet we know L. D. S. who have accepted and published to the broad world, Revelations from men that had no more right to get or give revelations than Ben Butler or Gen. Sheridan, yet these saints feast on the false tales of usurpers, and call it good. As many as four times during his ministry, he called the attention of his people to his death, and the appointing of another in his stead. In 1830 he told the church how he was ordained by Peter, James and John, (angels). In 1831 he, in a definate and a plain way, told the plan that would be adopted in setting a man in his place. This was done that the people might not be deceived by by false brethren or usurpers. Yet with all of these land marks, men have led their fellows from the Rook of Christ to fables and lies. A Book of Rules was adopted by the church, which contained provisions for filling up any vacancy that might occur by death or otherwise. By this book I will show who the man was that was appointed and ordained to fill Joseph's place. There is no great mystery in this matter, we only take the Book of Rules, and by that, identify the man:—

First, When was the Man to be Appointed? Book of Rules, Section 43, Part 1st: "And this ye shall know assuredly, that there is none other appointed unto you to receive Commandments, *until* he be taken."

There is nothing mysterious about this. All there is of it, there was no one to be appointed *until* he was taken. This settles the question adversely, with those usurpers and false teachers, who claim Joseph did ever ordain a man (or boy) to stand as President of the church *before* he was taken. Comment is not necessary. The next question is to let the Book tell us through whom was the successor to be appointed. It reads: "But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift, except it be through him,"—Book of Rules, Section 43, Part 2. We need nothing plainer on who was to appoint. We all know how President Harrison appoints officers in the Federal Government, and the plan was carried out on the same principle by Mr. Smith in appointing his successor. Further comment on this is not needed.

The next question we want to learn is the extent of Mr. Smith's power in planting a man in his stead. We will let the Book settle this also: Book of Rules, Section 43, 2d Part,—says, "If it (the gift) be taken from him, he shall not have power *except* to appoint another in his stead. This limits Mr. Smith's power to simply appoint another in his stead, etc. Then in addition to this the Book reads,—"And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived—that you may know they are not of me." Will these Rules fail to detect all usurpers, and help us to disern the duly appointed man? We say they will not, for God said: "And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived." Therefore by these Rules we can criticise all that have put up claims, and directly identify the man that was legally appointed, and by Angels ordained, as he told us before,—(1831).

We have learned when, and through whom, the successor was to be appointed; also the extent of Mr. Smith's power in planting the man to fill his place. We now ask, Who was to ordain the successor? Let the Book answer the question: "For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me, shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before,"—Book of D. & C. Section 43, Part 2.

This part of the planting the man into the Presidency, is like all the other parts, plain and definite. He was to be ordained as he had told us before, this date or time. In 1830 we are told, the Prophet Joseph, was ordained by Peter,

James and John, (Angels). By this we learn that the successor was to be ordained as the predecessor was ordained, no less no more. This compels us to hold that the successor was to be ordained by Angels. The Book (D. & C.) brings us to these and no other conclusions. Thus we have fulfilled our promise, by simply telling the public what the Book says on the appointment and ordination of the successor to Joseph Smith.

After setting forth the law on appointing and ordaining the successor, we will add our own testimony: First, Joseph Smith was duly called and legally ordained even by Angels, and stood to the nations of the earth as did Moses. He filled his mission like a brave man. He translated from the records the Book of Mormon, which contains the history of the Indians, and many other important facts concerning the nations of this day. He need not suffered as he did, yet he chose it rather than the honors of this short life. He was aware of the fate that should befall him, but he stood up to do the work given him to do. He died as a servant of God and the Great Jesus Christ, and has his reward.

At the death of Joseph, Mr. James J. Strang claimed he had been ordained in the same way that Joseph was (by Angels) and had been legally constituted the President of the Church. He published his claims, sent them abroad, and published to the world he was ready and willing to meet, and discuss his claims with any that were willing to compare their views with his. He clearly proved his authority to all that took pains to criticise them. He was identified by the public in and around the country where he lived and died, as the legal successor of Joseph Smith. He translated from the records that was taken from Laban the Book of the Law of the Lord, a work of 336 pages, which Joseph had told of before his death. And the work that Lehi had in view when he said that Joseph should write. See 2d Book of Nephi, 2d Chapter. This Book of the Law of the Lord, is often spoken of in the Bible, and has been called one of the lost Books.

James, like Joseph, had bitter persecutions, yet he bravely stood for the truth and right. He had presented views of his martyrdom, and called his friends aside and gave them hints of coming trouble. He, like Joseph, might of avoided it by leaving the church and seeking his own ease with the world. But he chose to stand to his duty as the leader of God's people, and meet his fate. We need not speak of his noble life, for it is read and known by the honorable men that meet him in the legislative halls of his state.

It is true, many of the usurpers lied, and to cover their false claims they misrepresented him and his teachings. But they stand on the page of history, and will be read and known as long as sun and moon endure—while the usurpers will fall with their lies. Men will yet rise up and honor the names of Joseph and James as the chosen of good.

We would like to end our testimony here and say, Peace to all Men; but we want to warn all honest men, that they be not led by usurpers and false teachers. It is a fact well known in all the factions of the Mormon schools, that the Gurley & Briggs reform that started in Wisconsin and terminated in the Re-organization, have from the first, accused the others of holding bad faith. And to this day have accused the Utah people of holding to lies, and teaching false doctrine. By the land laws, they had a right to hold up to public gaze what they held to, so long as their views were not opposed by the Government.

But let us take a look into the eyes of this re-organized child and see if we don't find sand: This child of Gurley & Briggs has given the Martyr the lie, and if Clark Braden knew how to handle the truth and lies, he would need no

better ropes (doctrine false) to hang the boys he has been playing with who claim to defend Joseph as a Prophet. They tell us that Joseph Smith did in '43 anoint and ordain his son, and publicly on the stand in Nauvoo, said: "I am no longer your Prophet, but this, my son, is your Prophet."

When this same Joseph had told the church years before, that all the part he would be able to take in planting another man in his stead would be to appoint, and that he would not do *until* he was taken. Gentlemen of No. 17, will you tell us what to call you? Speak out, and tell us what to call you. We want to call men and things by their right name. One thing is sure, Joseph either lied or else you have in that No. 17. And we are sorry to say, the lies of Ephraim are not all confined to No. 17. Them Books and writings that Joseph left us, don't lie. Nor do we have to hunt from Boston to Oregon, to find witnesses to prove what they teach. The writings of Moses, David, Jeremiah, Isaac, Malichi and the prophets, stood true and independent of even the words of Christ and his Apostles.

So with the work of Joseph, what he told the world was true, independent of the testimony of thousands. Yet false witnesses came against Moses. Christ, and all the servants of God; we have page after page of their lies against the truth. So with Joseph and James, we have their merit and on it we stand, and the usurpers may compile and send out their tracts with the testimony of apostates and dead Psuedoes who, when alive, told and published lies against Joseph But the words of the Prophets Joseph and James, stand to us as the north star to the Mariners on the ocean, at the midnight hour.

It looks bad to see a certain school of *Saints* throwing stones at Utah, when they are telling lies daily. It reminds us of the old tricks of Ephraim, as found in Hosea, xii-1; he lied daily in them days. Let the tales of modern Ephraim speak for themselves. One thing is certain, if Clark-Braden knew how to handle Joseph Smith and his works, he could find plenty of ropes (lies) in sight of these men he has been debating with, to hang them, but not a string as large as a fine thread to hurt Joseph or James. Joseph said in 1831 he would *only* have power to appoint a successor; he also said the successor would not be appointed until Joseph was taken. This was all right, and came to pass just as Joseph said thirteen years before—it was fulfilled in 1844. But here comes up a school of fellows and tell us that Joseph did *anoint* and *ordain* his son in 1843, and constituted him the President of the Church. Clark-Braden can't hurt Joseph nor his successor on the policy of these wise Mormon Legislators, who try to make Joseph a man-made and man-sent prophet. But if he can't take Joseph's words and make them false teachers like himself, then he is small potatoes and few in a hill, (to use a figure).

In conclusion, we say that we have proved that Mr. Smith pointed out the policy that would be taken at his death, in planting a man in his stead. Mr. Strang was the only man that ever presented legal claims to that office. We might call up the names of scores that came out at that time and gave their testimony to the world that James was the man. We might call over the names of men and women, but we have our case without. If men will not accept of what we have taken from the Books, they can go where all unbelievers go. But there is one question that I am often asked: Who stands at the head of the work of God, now? I answer, the man that holds the highest Priesthood! It is the work of God, and He builds or pulls down when and whom he will. Joseph Smith could not ordain a man to fill his place, but he could ordain a man to fill any other office in the church. It took Angels to ordain him, and it

took Angels to ordain a man like him. But we have no record that James should appoint a man to fill his place. Yet we can tell our friends, who held the highest Priesthood in the Church at the death of James.

Nov. 6, 1846, James J. Strang, was commanded to go and anoint and ordain Joseph Smith, the son of the martyr, to the same Priesthood his uncle Hiram held. We have all the proof we want that James did obey God. And that left the son of Joseph as one of the Presidents of the Church, and the Book of Rules says in case of death of either of the 1st Presidents, the other shall preside until the vacancy is filled. This was the situation of the church at the death of James. So that by virtue of the ordination Joseph obtained under the hands of James and no other ordination. We hold him the legal President of the Church from the death of James to this day.

Let those that want light on this last statement, get the Revelation of Nov. 6, 1846. That will tell on what young Joseph stands, and on what he don't stand. Then I am questioned as to why I don't join the Gurley & Briggs Reform, handled now by young Joseph, my reply is: I was baptised in 1842, stood by Joseph until death, then I accepted James, and stood by him until he was shot; then when I learned that James did obey God and did anoint and ordain the youth, I have identified him as the President and Patriarch as was Hyram Smith, and I have nothing to join or disjoin. I stand in the same church that I was baptised into in 1842. If that church will not save men and me, I fear that one got up by men that accuse Joseph of lying and not doing as he promised, will be no help to me.

I hold Mr. Smith as President of the Church, yet he don't hold the degrees of Priesthood that Joseph did; he don't hold the keys of Mysteries; he don't hold the Sceptre in his hand as did Strang, yet he will stand as President until God removes him and sends another. But says one, "How can you hold him as President, when he will not identify you in the Priesthood you obtained under James?" What need I care how he holds me or don't hold me, when I know what I have got and what he has. I am not a Republican, yet I will hold Harrison as President whether he pleases me or not, until his term is out. Yet I will not endorse his veto or Bills he don't veto. I will stand back and say, Mr. Harrison, go on, your time will run out! So I say of young Joseph, go ahead, I will not adopt nor endorse your teachings. But I will say to all men, that he is the President and only man in all the earth that holds Keys as did Hyram Smith. I am just as well satisfied that young Joseph is doing the work, as that John the Baptist, done a work to prepare a people for the higher degrees of power or Priesthood, yet his people teach many things contrary to the order of God's House.

I set my hand to this expecting to meet God and my fellows, wishing all honest people well and no harm.

Truly and sincerely,

L. D. HICKEY.

Coldwater, Mich., June 15, 1891.